

# 'Dance is beyond male and female'

In an interview to S. Sahaya Ranjit, Seshadri Iyengar says dance is beyond gender stereotypes.

S. Sahaya Ranjit

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A male doctor who dances Bharatanatyam is something unusual in India. Because we don't have dancing doctors who heal people. But Dr Seshadri Iyengar, 41, is a Bharatanatyam dancer and choreographer from Bangalore. Described by critics as an outstanding Bharatnatyam technician and an amazingly versatile dancer, Seshadri believes he was born to dance. He travels to London every year to be part of a dance company where he choreographs and participates in shows. Born into a family of art connoisseurs, he was drawn towards rhythm, music and natural poise at the age of nine and has been trained by Guru Padmini Ravi. In Delhi for a recital, he shares his dreams and views on dance with *India Today's* Assistant Editor S. Sahaya Ranjit. Excerpts

## Why did you take dancing over being a doctor?

I have studied to be a doctor for five years but I have done dancing which is my first love for 30 years. So I decided to take up dancing professionally.

### Do you find any difficulty being a male dancer or sometimes you felt frustrated among dancers?

I never felt the discrimination. Dance is asexual. It is the dancer who dons the role of either Krishna or Radha or Parvati or Shiva. It has nothing to do with gender. If one is a good dancer, he will be appreciated. The male dancer can perform and portray all the *rasas* as well as the females. Dance is beyond being a male or female. It has nothing to do with the body. The external body is only manifesting what is internal - the *bhava* and the *abhinaya*.



Dr Seshadri Iyengar.

Photo: Avinash Pasricha

### What do you think of reality shows?

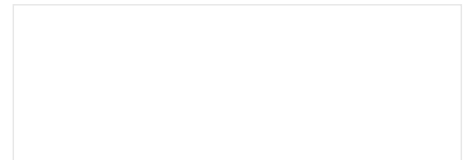
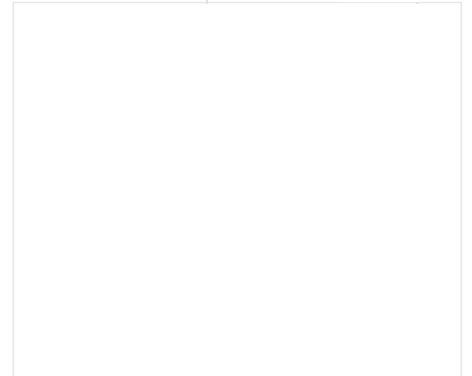
Reality shows are a blessing. In fact, there should be more such shows. Because it is giving a platform to millions of young dancers to showcase their talent. It is a joy to see the dancers dance and express themselves. In fact, there is something to be learnt from other dancers and dance forms. Even in the *arangetram*, when the dancer goes to the stage to dance for the first time, there is some thought behind what she or he dances. One should learn and try to imbibe what is best in other forms. And what is needed is to internalise the influences to create something new.

### Do you think the art of solo dancing is dying?

I don't think so. There is a place for solo dancing which requires a different form of dynamics and energy. A solo can be as powerful as a choreographed piece. You can't apply the same technique and yardstick for both. In a group dance, the solo may not be important but in solo one has to live through the characters very intensely and create that identity and beauty.

### What is your dream?

I don't live in past and future. I live in the present. I want to develop a module for students which will teach them what dance is all about. In India, lots of people don't know that there are different dance forms in India. I want to educate such students. That is my dream.



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